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California, Oregon, and Washington Take Action Toward Healthy Oceans, Coasts, and Coastal Communities

West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health releases implementation plans

The Governors of California, Oregon, and Washington today released eight issue-specific work plans to improve and sustain the health of the three states' shared coastal and ocean resources and the communities that depend on them. With \$500,000 in new funding from the federal government, projects funded by existing federal and state investments will be able to continue and the three states will begin to look at which projects to start next.

"We are moving from planning to action with the release of these implementation plans," said California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. "Together we made a commitment to address climate change, combat ocean garbage, reduce water pollution, protect our marine habitats, and to unlock the mysteries of our offshore waters by mapping the seafloor off all three states. Today we are taking a bold new step in fulfilling that commitment."

In 2006 Governors Schwarzenegger, Kulongoski, and Gregoire committed to taking action to protect the states' shared coastal and ocean resources. In July 2008, the three Governors released a West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health (WCGA) Action Plan that identified common ocean and coastal management priorities. The

regional agreement was the first of its kind on the West Coast and also aligns well with federal planning efforts currently under way under the Obama Administration's Ocean Policy Task Force established in 2009.

The three Governors are now releasing final implementation plans for eight issue areas identified by the WCGA two years ago: 1. Climate Change, 2. Polluted Runoff, 3. Marine Debris, 4. *Spartina* Eradication, 5. Renewable Ocean Energy, 6. Ocean Awareness and Literacy, 7. Seafloor Mapping, and 8. Sediment Management. The issue areas represent the need to clean up the ocean, protect it from future damage and the importance of balancing new uses of the ocean with existing practices such as fishing and habitat protection.

"The best way to protect the interests of coastal communities is to preserve our existing ocean resources and identify new economic development opportunities," Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski said. "One example is wave energy. We can tap our ocean as a new source of green power in a way that protects the traditional uses of our ocean. We accomplish this by engaging the public in ocean management policy decisions on the state and regional level, and I encourage participation by all people on the West Coast in shaping the future of our ocean."

The implementation plans were developed by groups known as Action Coordination Teams (ACTs), comprised of federal, state, local, tribal and stakeholder representatives on the West Coast. Members of these tri-state teams are experts in their fields and have firsthand experience addressing these challenges. Their final plans reflect the numerous comments received from the public when the implementation plans were released in draft form.

"An enormous amount of work was put into these work plans to benefit ocean and coastal health and our working communities," Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire said. "This

shows the strongest commitment on the part of our citizens and experts. We owe them our deepest gratitude and thanks. Now we must turn our full attention to getting plans transformed into real, on-the-ground work.”

These eight comprehensive plans identify and prioritize on-the-ground projects to ensure successful long-term coordination and implementation of regional priorities identified in the Action Plan. Examples of actions identified within these plans include:

- Initiating a National Academy of Sciences study to determine estimates for sea level rise for the entire West Coast, including related factors such as changes in storminess, for the years 2030, 2050 and 2100.
- Completing a high resolution map of the seafloor off of California, Oregon, and Washington, by 2020. This crucial information will help communities prepare for tsunami waves, inform the siting of ocean uses such as wave energy projects, and inform fisheries management.
- Evaluating the potential for renewable ocean energy projects off our coast and assembling data and information to help identify and address potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of such development. This will ensure that renewable energy development occurs in areas least likely to harm fisheries, sensitive marine habitats, or local coastal communities.

To read the full text of the eight final work plans or to learn more about the WCGA, please visit www.westcoastoceans.gov. Two additional WCGA draft work plans on Sustainable Communities and Integrated Ecosystem Assessments are soon to be released for public comment.

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